Apprenticeship — Practice-teaching.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT WORCESTER, MASS.

Pamphlet E.

Approved by

The State Board of Publication.



GRADE V.—VISIT OF OBSERVATION.



GRADE I. — THE STORY.



GRADE II. — WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.



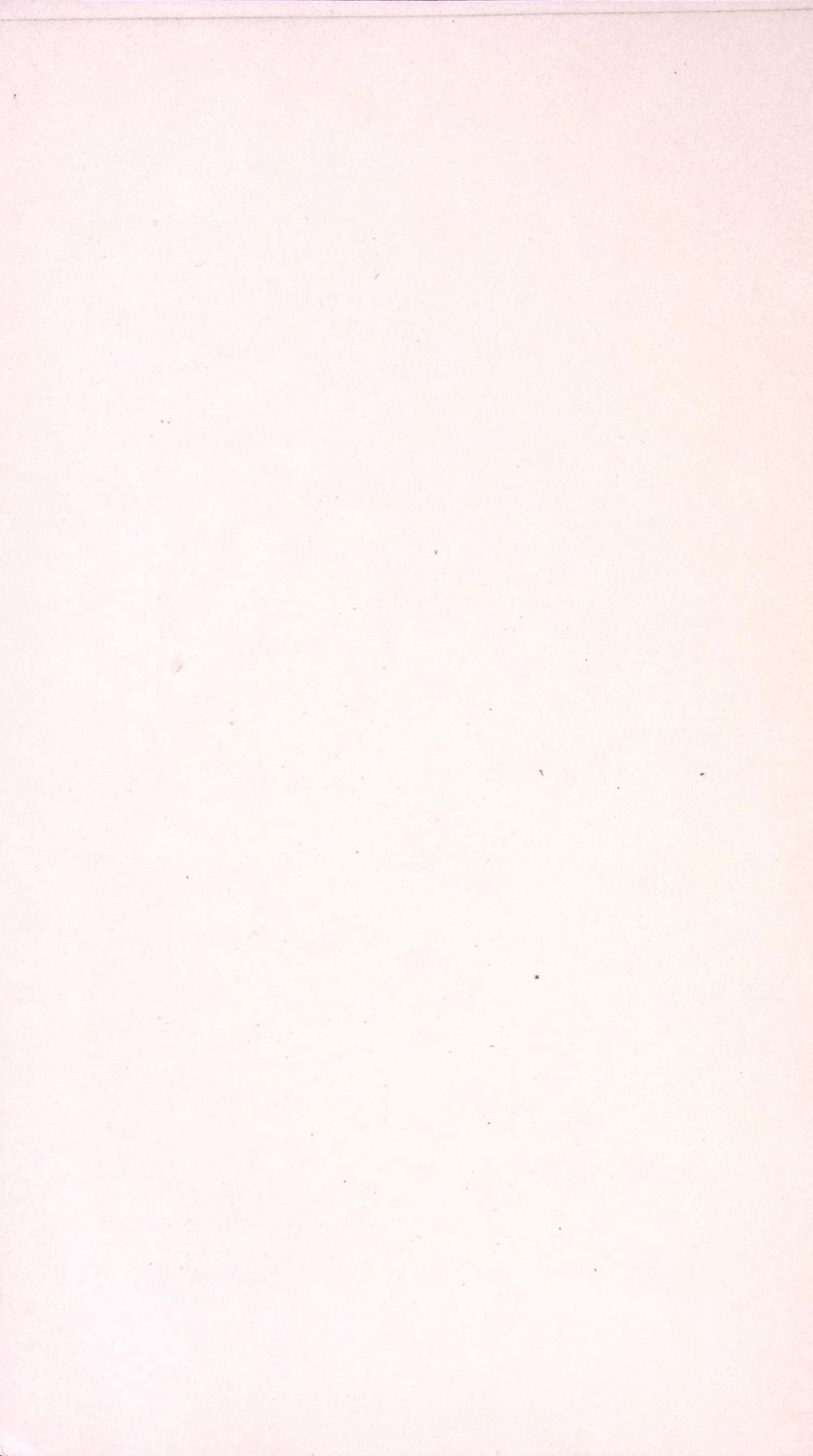
GRADE IV.—LOCAL GEOGRAPHY, WORCESTER



GRADE V. — UNITED STATES HISTORY.



GRADE VIII.—A LESSON IN GERMAN.





WORCESTER COUNTY TRUANT SCHOOL, ARITHMETIC.



SPECIMENS OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

Pamphlet E.

APPRENTICESHIP — PRACTICE-TEACHING.

Practice-teaching in the State Normal School at Worcester takes the form of an apprenticeship at teaching in the public schools of the city. This may extend through a minimum period of a half-year, or, as will be hereafter explained, it may be, and usually is, continued through a whole school year. As the city has a population of about one hundred and thirty thousand, and employs over five hundred teachers in its public schools, the field thus furnished for practice is ample for all that the normal school will ever be likely to require.

Preparation for Apprenticeship. — There are many exercises in the school which prepare for this apprenticeship. In fact, most of the work which a pupil does has this in view to some extent; but it will be necessary to mention here only that which bears directly upon it. During the first year and a half at the normal school the students in turn spend a half-day at a time in the kindergarten and in the primary school, which are maintained by the normal school for this purpose; and as these observations continue during so long a period, each student has opportunity to become well acquainted with the methods and management used in primary classes. Each week the students meet the primary and kindergarten teachers for conference on what they have seen; and the teacher of the primary classes has, in addition, classes in elementary methods with the same students.

During the first half of the second year of attendance at the normal school, students are permitted, through the courtesy of the public school authorities of the city, to

spend two hours a week in visiting the schools, where they see such lessons as they can best understand and profit by (see "wing-frame" 11). These visits are arranged for beforehand with selected public school teachers, so that the students may receive the greatest benefit from them, and as a rule, no more than a half-dozen students at a time visit any one room. They thus see the ordinary working of the school, free from any of the elements of an exhibition. The students make written reports to the normal school supervisors on their observations, and these are later discussed in class.

BEGINNING OF APPRENTICESHIP. — After this preparation and actual contact with the schools, students are ready to take an active, though strictly subordinate, part in their management, and in the latter half of their second year they serve, without pay, as apprentices to the regular teachers. Each appointment is for about six weeks of four school days each, and there are three appointments during the half-year, beginning with the primary grades and ending with the grammar grades. Thus each student acquires an intimate knowledge of the whole range of the public schools below the high school. The character of the work done is shown by the "Apprentices' Programs," in another part of this exhibit (see "wing-frame" 13) so far as regular lessons are concerned; and details of a more specific nature are given in the "Apprentices' Diaries," also a part of this exhibit (see volume of Specimen Diaries).

DUTIES. — But there is much irregular and incidental work which cannot be so shown, but which may be inferred from the fact that the student is really an *apprentice*, though serving without pay, whose time and energy are wholly at the disposal of her master, the public school teacher. The arrangement of the work of the apprentice, its character and amount, are made by the regular teacher of the school; and with these the normal school authorities never interfere; but the public teachers are often glad to avail themselves of suggestions made by the supervisors from the normal school. The apprentice is urged to accept cheerfully every burden and responsibility which

her teacher may be disposed to allow her to bear; and it is a noteworthy fact that this relation has been maintained without friction for more than twenty-five years. The apprentice frequently takes charge of the school for an hour, or even for a whole day, in the absence of the teacher. Often the school is divided into two sections, and the apprentice is made responsible for the instruction of one section, or she is given certain exercises which she conducts with the whole school. During any time when she is not otherwise engaged, she observes the teacher in charge and thus gains much valuable knowledge of teaching and school management. The teacher also gives her apprentice, in friendly criticism, the benefit of her own experience. This delicate office is exercised in many ways. Sometimes it is in exchanging classes with the apprentice that the teacher shows her just how the work should be done; sometimes it is by help in the preparation of lessons and lesson-plans; and not infrequently, it is through direct admonition and advice.

Supervisors from the Normal School. — On the part of the normal school, three of the staff, acting as supervisors, spend a considerable portion of their time in visiting apprentices, going from one school to another, and spending a longer or shorter time in each, as circumstances require (see "wing-frames" 8, 9, 10 and 12). By observing teaching, examining written work, looking over lesson-plans, and consulting with both apprentice and teacher, a good idea of the needs and progress of the apprentice is obtained, and suggestions and criticism are freely offered. The apprentice keeps a diary (shown in another part of this exhibit — see volume of Specimen Diaries), which is given each week to the supervisor, and on Saturday the "Platform Exercises," also described in another part of this exhibit (see "wing-frame" 6, and pamphlet D) are given by apprentices, the subjects being taken from their daily experience. Thus the normal school keeps constantly in touch with the apprentice, and its information as to her work is derived from so many different sources as to make it, on the whole, an accurate index of her ability and faithfulness.

Attendance at Normal School. — On Saturday, which is a school day at the normal school, the apprentice class is in attendance and meets there each supervisor, who makes such general criticisms, explanations, and suggestions as may have interest for, and application to, the whole class. The rest of the time on Saturday the apprentice spends in preparing for her work, — consulting books and teachers, gathering material, and, what is considered of great value, comparing notes and exchanging views with her classmates. This intercourse with each other brings the experience of the whole class before every member, and methods, devices, and expedients are passed through a sort of clearing-house where each may select what seems to her of value.

Relation to Public School Authorities.—Although the right to use the public schools for the purpose of practice in this way is formally conceded by the authorities of the city, the acceptance of apprentices on the part of individual teachers is wholly voluntary. The head supervisor consults first with the principal of a school and tells him to what teachers on his staff she would like to send apprentices. If he makes no objection, she then asks the teacher directly if she is willing to take an apprentice, and if a favorable answer is received, the apprentice is notified of her appointment. At the proper time she presents herself to the principal, who introduces her to the teacher, and she is then ready for any work that may be assigned to her. As there are over five hundred teachers in the schools of the city, it is possible for the supervisor to exercise such care and discretion that each apprentice may be assigned to a superior teacher. Moreover, with the needs and defects of the apprentice in mind, she is assigned to teachers who will be most likely to benefit her. This feature of the system, made possible by the large number and superior character of the teachers in the public schools of the city of Worcester, is considered of great importance for the *training* of apprentices; and observation shows that the silent influence of the teacher and the school are far more effective forces than "critiques," suggestions, or the study of books on methods and management.

Attitude of Public School Teachers. — It should be said, moreover, that the teachers feel keenly both the honor and the responsibility of their position. They make careful plans in advance, and are constantly on the watch for any change which may benefit their apprentices. It has been the almost invariable experience during the twenty-five years and more that this plan has been in operation, that the apprentices have been given every opportunity to perfect themselves in their art, and that the teachers have exercised an unusual amount of care, discretion, patience, and friendliness toward their charges. Without such active and sympathetic co-operation it would be well-nigh impossible to carry on the work.

Advanced Apprentices. — In addition to the regular apprenticeship outlined above, there is provided for those students who show more than usual ability, faithfulness, and especially power of growth, an additional half-year of practice on the same general plan as the first, but with several important modifications. Instead of six weeks, the "Advanced Apprentice" spends nine or ten weeks in a school, while the number of appointments is correspondingly decreased. Instead of serving in many of the grades, she is placed only in those for which she has shown most aptitude by her previous work. She is encouraged to make special analysis and preparation in the studies of these grades, and to take full responsibility for the conduct of one or more of them. A higher standard of attainment is now required of her in every way; and the effort is made to cultivate in her the highest professional spirit and attitude. It is intended that the advanced apprenticeship shall have the same relation to the regular course that the course for the doctorate bears to that leading to the bachelor's degree.

Apprenticeship in High Schools. — For those students who possess the requisite maturity and scholarship, assignments as apprentices in any of the three high schools of the city are made, where they are given such part in the instruction as they are able to undertake, and where they may receive training and practice not afforded by grammar schools. This enables the normal school author-

ities to offer a special course of a year and a half for college graduates, — a year of professional study and a half-year of apprenticeship, — with the entire school system of the city at their disposal.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS. — In addition to the facilities for practice already described, the normal school has valuable privileges in two special schools, — at the Washburn Memorial Hospital and at the Worcester County Truant School in Oakdale, a few miles from the city (see "wing-frame" 12).

WASHBURN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL. — At the Memorial Hospital there are often children who are detained there during convalescence, or who are undergoing long courses of treatment which would not interfere with their power of doing some kinds of school work if the conditions were properly controlled. To give these children some intellectual occupation and interest is, indeed, sometimes, to assist in their cure. For such the authorities at the hospital have arranged a school-room, and the normal school sends regularly two experienced apprentices, who conduct classes and give individual instruction. Since the children are of all ages and stages of advancement, the school becomes of necessity an ungraded one and from its very nature presents exceptional conditions and children. The apprentice therefore receives training in a direction not permitted by her other work, and resource, adaptability, tact, and teaching skill, are developed in a way that supplements the regular training.

WORCESTER COUNTY TRUANT SCHOOL. — At the truant school the apprentice is received on the same terms as in the public schools of the city. She is under the direction of the superintendent and in the immediate charge of the teacher employed there. The difference, as may be inferred, is in having a class of boys to deal with who are exceptional in many ways. The experience of the apprentice in this school gives her good training in the exercise of her art, and special training in the management of a class of exceptional pupils, representatives of which are to be found in nearly every school where, — owing often to lack of skill on the part of the teacher — they give a

disproportionate amount of trouble. They are always a source of anxiety to the inexperienced teacher, but having become familiar with them during her apprenticeship, she no longer fears them, and she has now considerable command of methods for dealing with them. It is unfortunately impossible for all the apprentices to have practice in both these special schools; but a large number do have, and in this, as in other cases, selection is made of those who will be most likely to benefit by the kind of work offered.

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL. — In addition to the books in the reference library of the normal school, which are lent to the apprentices on the same terms as to the other pupils (shown in detail in another part of this exhibit — see pamphlet A), there is a large and constantly increasing collection of material which is especially for the use of the apprentices. This comprises, — (*a*) a special line of books useful in teaching, such as books on methods and devices, supplementary readers, collections of fairy tales and fables, historical stories, books on nature and nature-study, and collections of music suitable for teaching rote-songs. (*b*) Several hundred wall charts, illustrating natural history, the natural sciences, arts and manufactures, geography and methods of teaching such subjects as reading, writing and drawing. (*c*) About seven hundred pictures of birds and animals of all countries, mounted on cards and large enough to be seen by a whole class. (*d*) Collections of native animals, birds, insects, plants, woods, minerals, rocks, fossils, and local manufactures. (*e*) Maps, including political, topographical, relief models, outline blackboard stencils, outline maps on blackboard cloth, historical maps to illustrate the periods of discovery and of territorial growth, maps of campaigns and battles, and many others of special nature. (*f*) A collection of pictures of places of historic interest, of portraits of celebrated men and women, of types of fine architecture, painting and sculpture (see "wing-frame" 14). Besides these collections, the school owns three duplicating machines which the pupils are taught to use, and which enables the apprentices to print any

number of copies of maps, drawings or notes on any subject of study, for the use of their pupils. All these things are made available by a card catalogue; the apprentices take them to their schools and keep them as long as they are of use, and the fact that they are used is shown by the number each year condemned as worn out and replaced by new ones. The employment of illustrative material by the apprentices is encouraged in order to enrich their teaching, to enable them to try the various aids to instruction, and to accustom them to variety in their methods of teaching. They become acquainted with the advantages and perils attending the use of such things, and learn what best suits their own methods of teaching. Their apprenticeship affords so much practice that they are able to develop what gives promise of succeeding and to reject that which they have been unable to use to advantage. They thus, in a measure, anticipate a process which consumes much of the time and energy of a young teacher who has had no such training. They are led to use a method of "trial and error" which later may help to prevent their falling into grooves and ruts, and assist in their professional growth.

Exceptions. — Individual pupils, who find it impossible or impracticable to take the apprenticeship, enjoy all the other advantages of the school with this single exception. It should be said, however, that no person receives the diploma of the school without having given *in the schoolroom* clear evidence of ability to teach. Unless they have had a considerable experience in teaching before coming to the normal school, students usually take the apprenticeship, and the advanced apprenticeship also, if they are allowed to do so. Not infrequently a student attends the normal school for a year and a half and then obtains a leave of absence for a year to teach. If she succeeds as a teacher she may return to the normal school for a half-year and graduate. But in such a case she is not ranked as having received the training of the apprenticeship.